When One is With Nature

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WHEN ONE IS WITH NATURE

BY
JEANETTE CHALMERS

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By JEANETTE CHALMERS

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WHEN ONE IS WITH NATURE.

JUST A WORD.

THESE simple expressions of thought-impulses were nearly all suggested while sojourning in a small prison village situated upon the southeastern exposure of a spur of the Adirondack Mountains.

This is indeed a wonderful and most unusual locality. Perched half way up the mountain side is the little village dignified by the presence of a prison with huge gray walls, immense buildings of brick and stone, high smoke-stacks, and many of the modern things of life—such as electric lights, *et cetera*, all unique in themselves because hardly outside the shade of the virgin forest.

From almost any point thereabout one

can see spread out before him the valleys of the Champlain and the Saranac flanked and horizoned by great mountains; to the south and west the Adirondacks, to the east the Green Mountains, at the foot of which nestle the blue waters of Lake Champlain and its contributing rivers.

The view from the higher points is beyond description; so comprehensive that no artist can reduce it to canvas; so marvellous in coloring, in light and shade, no tongue can portray it. Here nature seems entranced with her own beauty and softly smiles at her own reflections.

One feels that never was the sun so softly bright, never were shadows so fantastic, never were clouds more billowy and illumined. In no spot ever before did nature seem to show so many moods and play so many pranks. Now bright and gay, or pensive and æsthetic, then

sombre, forbidding, yea, appalling. Never did we see sky arch in such unbroken span across the vision; never did glorious sun and full-orbed moon sweep with such majestic movement from horizon to zenith, from zenith to horizon. Never were there more perfect colorings, more phantom mists, more diffusive radiance capable of more resplendent and softening effects. Never a purer, more exhilarating atmosphere; never a spot where nature was more satisfying.

When once one has wandered along the winding pathways over the hills and has instilled into his veins the fragrant aroma of the subtle odors of the woods; when one has once basked in the soft rich sunshine and been soothed to reposeful contemplation by the sweet breath of the mountains, he is already possessed by the charms of the place; but to appreci-

ate it to the full one must know it well and see it long, for nature here has many secrets and is chary of them.

Then there comes the stirring of new sensations, and one feels he must express something of it or suffer, so these simple lines came to be and are but the imperfect voicings of an inspiring nature.

Dear reader friend, I do not expect you to so entirely feel as the writer does about these little thoughts of a great, exquisite nature.

If you have doubts, I ask you to go, see, and feel for youself.

JEANETTE CHALMERS.

THE CYCLE OF THE SEASONS.

THE glorious colorings of autumn had long since faded to duller shades and sombre hues. The dry leaves had ceased to rustle their crinkled sides in plaintive requiem o'er so much deadness all about, and had nestled quietly down to mother earth, save where the pallor-stricken beech leaves clung to chilled and sapless branches and in shivering whispers told of folly's hope. Mourning November no longer shed her tears o'er the many dead. Autumn had given up the struggle with the forces of the north wind and lay helpless in the arms of winter bound by her icy fetters.

Kind nature had already compassion-

ately covered from view the gloomy evidences of her desolation with a white mantle of the purest snow; just now it lay fresh and sparkling upon every branch and twig of the naked forest trees and hung in long feathery pendants from the drooping evergreens. Every more aspiring weed and blade of grass was muffled in its woolly embrace.

All was whiteness, except where the restless birches had shaken their bronzed limbs in jealous indignation at this rivalry of their own whiteness and stood like brown skeletons against the winter's sky.

Spring had lingered so tardily in the lap of winter that one would judge her to be quite content with her frigid companion. Indeed nature seemed reluctant to make her great effort and bring forth the fragrance of the year. The trees of the woods still exposed their anatomy of long

gray limbs and shook their skeleton fingers in empty air. The dull gray and russet browns of late autumn's painting lay from hilltop adown the valley's sweep, still unbroken, and there was upon the whole face of nature a melancholy hush, not even expectancy in it all. But one day a messenger came out of the south with hurrying speed and warming breath and touched with a magic wand of sunlight winter's icy fetters and they broke away and melted into tears of gentle sorrow o'er their cold unyielding selfishness: then all the land was redolent with warmth and vigor, and falling showers, chasing rivulets, bursting buds, springing grass, and tiny leaflets filled the earth with the sweet odors and sounds of spring.

Now is the time when nature bends her broad back tot he mighty effort of turning back the tide of last year's dead and evolv-

ing from its lifeless forms the glorious heraldry of a new and fervent life. 'T is no wonder she groans and sighs at her task, for so profound is this sleep of nature that naught but the miracle of the seasons could arouse her.

Now the time has come for a new effort of living, a time to shake off the lethargy which has so long possessed us and bound us to our habitual shortcomings; then too we are touched to a sense of newness and freshness of life in feeling and in hope; here is a suggestion of an immortallity of things, for we take up life's burdens and cares with renewed energy and zeal; the cold scepticisms of winter give place to the trusting faiths of spring.

This should be the most natural time to make new resolves and to plant our feet more firmly in the way of higher, nobler living, to leave behind us a deal of rub-

bish ; and we, as nature does, take on fresh garments, a vestment of truth, for truly this is the youth time of the year ; with all this budding life, with all this resurrection force apparent in all nature's forms, dull indeed is the soul that is not stirred to renewed activity and a consciousness of greater powers yet undeveloped.

Spring had budded itself into the blossoms of summer, and all its more gentle fervency of life had given place to that intenser life of summer's growth. Everywhere from the teeming earth came a prodigality of growth ; the summer sun had sent its searching rays down deep into mother earth's hidden resources, and from its warming touch the long grasses waved in lazy undulations upon the meadow lands.

The trees had been clothed in rich garments of shining green, and their dark

borders marked the horizon's reach all around. Flowers sprang up from every conceivable, unused place; out on the great stretch of farmlands the whole atmosphere was pulsating with fervid heat.

The cattle lolled in shady nooks or lashed their rotund sides in lazy monotonous switches as they stood knee-deep in the running waters of some shady stream.

The hum of myriad insect life filled the air with the busy songs of summer. All was life and growth and beauty.

Down deep in earth's embowelled laboratories there was great activity, seething heat, and throbbing effort for the fruition of the season's hope, and all nature sweltered and sweat great drops of dew upon the brow of night from the strain and labor of her gigantic task; but gaseous vapors, streaming liquids in heaped up atoms were fast being shaped by her

untiring, accurate hand into perfect forms of growth and completed life, and then, with the fruitage and glory of a work well done, summer's passionate heat flamed and flickered itself out into the red and yellow tints of autumn. Instinct with her expiring life, the fading year applied to every living thing her last efforts in the alchemy of growth, in mellow fruit and bursting ear, and richly spread the emblems of her passing life o'er all the earth in ripeness and in color.

Everywhere was color, lying in long zones upon the hillsides, shooting in tongues of flame up the declivities and prodigally touching to every conceivable shade the tufts upon the more level surface of the tree tops; every roadside weed and fence corner's shrub as well as the reaches of the forest land had felt and responded to the touch of the Titian

artist of the frost land who revels so in color. In every possible combination was this exquisite blending into perfect design, making a great natural picture which lay spread out with the witchery of the day's autumnal light upon it. The amber haze so peculiar to this time of ripeness lay upon all the land, from the wide expanse of the yellow fields to the purple hills beyond, and myriad throated insects sang a lullaby to the sleepy year so soon to be put to sleep in winter's snowy couch.

The year's perfection only pauses ere it
sinks to rest,
In sweet submission dies at the divine
behest,
That from its ashes there may rise a wider,
richer life,
Is all the object, all the destiny of this
natural strife.

THE MONTHS.

THE YEAR'S CALENDAR.

HAIL! O January! First month of the year,
Though austere and frigid you inspire no fear,
For your strong arms are frozen in fetters so fast,
That we laugh at your menace of cold bitter blast.
Your cold heart warms not by night or by day,
As over your kingdom you hold ice-born sway;
You weep not, you scarce shed a tear,
O'er the dead you have buried to nature so dear.

You 're asleep in a shroud December has made,
And are pale with the terror from heather to glade.
Your sunshine is moonlight, your breath is the frost,
Though sleeping you labor, your work is not lost,
For while stern is your mission and hard seems your fate,
'T is the new year's unfolding, 't is love, not hate.

Now February's wild furies lash the white earth
And pile high their columns in querulous mirth;
They moan and they roar in wild bitter rage,
To break winter's heart is the battle they wage;

They send the snow flying in scattering
flight,
And wake up the sunshine and shorten
the night;
They whisper the secret of a hope that is
dear,
And the waking earth pauses the sweet
words to hear.

Now March, with hoarse mutterings of
deep roaring sound
Breaks earth's icy fetters in which so long
bound;
She wrestles without with the demons of
cold,
And nature's warm life she seeks to unfold,
Till her heart is quite broken, exhausted
her powers,
And she sobs herself out in soft April
showers.

Capriciously they fall on the languishing earth,
And the mother heart wakens to give spring her birth;
And this gentle maiden in sunshiny curls,
Laughs at the rain clouds that round her do whirl;
She mocks at the cold winds, she climbs to the hills
And sends down her victory in gurgling rills;
She breathes her warm breath, she waves her bright wand,
And presto! her promise is abroad in the land;
With green tokens she fringes both field and highway,
Then smiles herself into the flowers of the May,

Who carpets the earth in verdure so green
And plants the dear flowers where nothing
was seen.
She soothingly coaxes the warm winds
from their lair,
And stirs up the caldrons of earth's hid-
den fire;
She wakens the germ to life that is new
And nurses their young shoots with her
plentiful dew;
She spreads out spring's mantle of leaf
and young blade,
And rests from her labors, for sweet June
she has made.

Yes, June with her roses white, yellow,
and red
Betokens the summer to which spring is
wed.
She sprinkles the meadows with yellow
and white,

With heads gently nodding, with eyes
that are bright;
She bids to her nuptials, in soft summer
sighs,
The sweet breath of the Southland and
sunny blue skies;
She sounds sweet melodies, a charm to be
heard,
And utters her heart in the songs of the
birds;
She plies well her mission, the long grasses
grow,
The trees spread their foliage, all nature 's
aglow
With the fervor of living, with a joy so
dear,
The bride of the springtime, the hope of
the year.

Yes, July, you have come with fast form-
ing ear,

With heat so intense you make our hearts
fear;
So crisp is your habit you scarce shed a
tear,
And we long for mist-ladened August,
whose coming is near;
But true to your privilege, you bake and
you scorch,
The sun is your splendor, the moon is
your torch;
You welcome the rays of the fast-falling
heat,
The loll of the cattle, the sheep's plaintive
bleat;
But deep in your nature there 's a feeling
so kind
That growth and perfection together you
bind.

O month of the vapors, you sweat for the
year,

Your labor is welcome, your presence is dear;
You prod the brown earth to herculean task,
And there is nothing in effort you do not ask.
You bathe the hot earth with dashes of rain,
And you give out your life in the fulness of grain.
You touch all that grows into symmetry fair,
And show as your fruitage the rich and the rare.
You writhe in the throes of the fast dying year,
And leave as a legacy the well ripened ear.

September, September, in crimson and gold,

In purple and russet your beauties unfold;
You smile and are genial just as of old,
But deep in your heart there 's a secret so cold,
For your warm breath is hiding the wintry frost,
And your sunshine is the reverie of a summer lost.
You lull our weak fancies to a slumbrous bed
Of delusive day-dreaming till the year is quite dead,
Then you hasten to cover the work of your hand
With the leaves of the forest, with the sheaves of the land;
But the wind sighs your requiem, dead flowers tell the tale,
Of a glory departed and your secrets unveiled.

Flaming October in visions of red
You shrink from the living, you hasten the dead.
You rustle your dress in wantonly glee
And sport with the winter that surely will be.
In soft winds you whisper the tales of the past,
And in hoarse-voiced mutterings you herald the blast
That strips the great forest of their garments of leaves,
And makes the earth bare our spirits to grieve.
You 're a dream, you 're a fancy, you 're love, you 're hate,
You dash our warm hopes to a cold, bitter fate.

Ah, weeping November, you come with your hosts

Of long-armed skeletons and fleeting white
ghosts.
Your tears are a river, your weeping a
flood,
Your sunshine is frozen and ice is your
blood.
We shiver and shrink from your gloomy
embrace
And wish for the time when you hide
your dark face;
We look for your morrow with oncoming
dread,
For we know that your labor is a work
with the dead.

But here comes December in vestments
of white
That sparkle in splendor as the stars of
her night.
You cover waste places, you hide from
our sight

The work of November with snow pure as
the light.
Your crisp, frosty fingers, fringed grasses
and twigs,
And bald-headed boulders are topped with
white wigs.
You adorn with white whiskers kind
nature's face,
And carpet the house-tops for Santa Claus
pace.
You mirror the rivers, you glass the broad
lakes,
You lock up the earth till springtime
awakes.

EVENING.

THE peace of evening lay upon the resting day, and breathed a hush to all of nature's working forces. Like some spirit of the dreamland, waning twilight mantled all the earth in a visible calm.

Ceased the din of labor, all was stillness save for the plaintive note of some sleepy bird, or the bursting song of some belated robin mingled with the brooklet's hesitating voice of babbling sound. Sharply cut, the mountains tipped with defiant light; blue the sky and bluer still the waters of the distant lake. Shifting shadows fled across the zones of phantom light and swept the hillsides into darkness. The scene was transcendent in beauty and

clearness of definition, every object, shape, and form so clearly cut and yet so softly drawn. 'T was the complacency of day serenely waiting to permit a last glimpse ere the sable curtain fell and shut out the light and in the night.

NIGHT.

ALL day long the sun had toiled up the brazen heavens, had hours since passed the zenith, and now, exhausted by its conflict with the legions of darkness, was just sinking to rest amidst a diffusion of flaming red, golden yellow, pale blue, and amber shades; roseate and purple reflections rested upon the sharply cut spines of the mountains, and softened their outlines down to a blending in of earth and sky. Great beams of light flamed the horizon, billowy clouds in woolly garments sailed slowly by, basking and sporting themselves in all this flood of color light.

Then came the reverie of the day, and

twilight tones and shades crept stealthily up the vaulted sky and light and color faded and went out.

But once more there is a lighting up, and fiery tongues lift the shadows only to flash out in the last expiring gasp of the dying day.

The rustling spirits of the air, heavy with the grief of day's decline, sink among the leaves and grasses and weep themselves to sleep, their teardrops falling like manna to the parched and thirsty earth.

Already the sable wings of night are unfolding over all the land, and from underneath dark shadowy forms steal out to take possession of the still and resting earth.

Now is the stalking time for those phantom spirits of the night who, standing at our bedsides, pour into our sleepy senses their dream tales, some of horror, some of joy.

But haste, you dread spirits of the night, for penetrating the mirky scroll are the bright-eyed sentinels of the sun to watch until his coming on the morrow, and, in a twinkling, night half shuts her wings and hovers down to earth pierced and o'erflooded with millions of star-lit rays, as all of heaven's battalions—her glittering host of stars—march forth and take possession as safeguards of the night.

Now only long dark shadows lie upon the earth, and the glory of the night has come in twinkling splendor and silent peace; and yet its miracle is not complete, for to the eastward slowly a tremulous glimmer and a pale flood of light is thrown out upon the waiting night. Ah! 't is the sun's armor-bearer, and soon the hillsides, plain, valley, and water's expanse are bathed in the ghostly light of the moon.

Now the shadows hie and huddle into

shapeless patches, in dark angles and underneath the shade of trees, but darkness is no more.

Fairy elves with moonbeam shuttles weave, in exquisite imagery, quaint and mystic patterns of moonshine laces which drape the earth in shimmering robes and make the delusion of the hour.

Softly steals a subtle presence in upon our senses and we see a world calmly beautiful. It lies out upon the waters and is depicted in every shape and form of even common things.

But what means this fiery herald in the east? With glittering shafts of light he breaks the heart of night. Far in advance of him he sends his messengers to tell, the conqueror of all darkness comes. Majestically he stands upon the horizon and pauses ere he sets the pace of time; the while the shadows play fantastic

pranks, the moon gently bows herself out in the west, and the starry hosts one by one retire to rest, and behold, the god of light is here, in all the glory of his power. All the dark spirits haste away, night is no more, the glad earth dries her tears and briskly applies herself to the tasks of day.

A WALK AT SUNRISE.

THE snow-flecked mountains were taking a bath in the rosy beams of the just rising sun, the waters of the lake lapped lazily up to sleepily embrace his timid rays, the birds had begun their morning chatter, and all nature breathed long and deep in the expectancy of the busy day.

Unless one has walked forth and seen and felt this hour of sunrise, he has never truly lived; unless one has taken in the spicy odors of the morning and felt the tingling, in every nerve and fibre, of her inspiring breath, he has never been near to nature's heart or held close communion with her secret charms and changing life.

To rise on such a morning, after a refreshing sleep, and look upon such a scene as this, to walk forth into the open country through secluded paths, and be with nature and witness her unfolding in her most affectionate mood and ready to bestow upon us the blessings of an advancing day—for such contact we cannot but be better. Breathe long and deep then, and let nature's pure air, rid of all uncleanness of heart, garnish anew its chambers and let in the flood light of grander, truer living and renewed hope. Let the past mean only resolution for the future and the rising of the day mean the rising of a new and calmer life within.

A NOTE OF SUMMER.

THE heaving bosom of the meadows was yellowed with nodding buttercups and flecked with modest white daisies; the red-jacketed strawberries half hid their scarlet sides underneath the curling leaves; the little brook sang merrily as it leaped from pebble to pebble or recklessly threw itself over some broken rock or prostrate tree; the breathings of the summer's panting life rustled the silken grasses, and sent broadcast over all the fields a spicy fragrance and delicious smells.

The meadow-lark's cheery note, the woodpecker's reveille, and the whir of the grasshoppers joined in a universal chorus of midsummer sounds.

AUTUMN.

THE purpling hills, the dreamy haze,
The golden ears of the shocked-up maize,
The yellow pumpkins, the reddening leaves,
The wealth of fruitage, the ripened sheaves,
Are autumn's tribute to the passing year,
And its sighing whispers tell of winter near.

AN AUTUMN WALK.

WHEN frosts have robbed the earth of green,
And only duller shades of gray and brown are seen;
When naked forests stretch wide their arms,
And floating hazes lie on distant farms;
When glinting sunshine rests upon the tree-tipped hills,
And silence brings the sound of distant rills;
When over all the fleece of autumn's halo lies,
And soft reflections tint the flecking skies;
I love to wander o'er the hills so strong and high,

O'er creaking mosses crisp and dry ;
To look upon the patterned ground,
In shaded grays, by crimson bound,
In dainty tufts of furzy things,
In all the shades that autumn brings ;
Here patching all with lichens gray,
There shading off with colors gay,
A natural etching at our feet,
Where tones and colors kindly meet.
I love to ponder on this dreamy wait
Of nature's lingering ere she shuts the gate
And closes all her heart to growing things,
And life and warmth take hasty wings.
My heart then sits in waiting too,
And sees itself by vision new.
It sees its deadness, its sombre hues,
Where once a fresh green promise grew,
But fruitless died for want of soil—
Went out because there was no oil ;
In autumn deadness there to lie,
A fringe of memory my soul to try.

UP THE MOUNTAIN SIDE IN LATE OCTOBER.

THROUGH wooded paths we walked that day,
Where white-trunked birches flanked the way,
And skirted spruces greened the brush;
Where leaping brooklet passed with hurried rush,
And spotted dogwood spread their arms,
And fragrant balsams exhaled their charms;
Where dripping mosses clung to rocks of gray,
And feathery ferns still held their sway;
O'er heaped-up reefs of rustling leaves,
O'er checkered paths the sunlight weaves,

To where with climb and hurried pace,
We come to bald and open space;
Where lifted high in open air,
The way is clear to vision fair.
What rapture fills the resting eye!
From rolling uplands to mountains high,
From heathered plains to vaulted sky,
From river's glint to lake's broad blue,
The softened beauty comes to view.
In swaying arms of forest gray,
And tufted reds and yellows gay,
O'er purpling hills and browning fields,
The autumn miracle her triumph wields,
A mystic dimness shields her hand
Till all is changed with magic wand.
Once more she smiles in rosy light
Before she hides the earth from sight;
With warming breath she lulls our fears,
And shows her heart in gentle tears;
Then softly fading with the year,
We wake to find the winter here.

NOVEMBER MIST.

UPON the uplands brown and gray,
On all expanse it softly lay;
It wreathed the hills in misty thrall,
Half hid the mountains in fleecy pall;
It swept the valley from our sight
And robbed the day of natural light.
In phantom forms it slowly rolled
And all the earth sought to enfold;
But, November mist, your fate is told
By to-morrow's sun or to-morrow's cold.

A MOUNTAIN VIEW.

JUST as you come around the angle of the roadway which turns on the uppermost shoulder of the mountain, the whole of a wonderful winter's scene is abruptly brought to view. Sweeping down and away from where you stand the mountain gradually sinks to the line of the valley, hundreds of feet below, and which is skirted on all sides by hills and mountains of the most varied and picturesque forms. Series after series of cone-like tops stand in multiple array, flanked by huge giant peaks clad with and capped by eternal snow.

To the southward are family groups wrapped in all the shades and hues that

blue, gray, and purple light can clothe them ; little and big, humble and majestic, they stand like huge bastions and colonnades to this great temple of Nature's handiwork. Snow-clad and forest-clad, they stand resplendent and dignified, yet calmly beautiful in symmetry of form.

To the south sweep the rolling surfaces of the valley's rise, patched and checkered with fields and squares of man's contrivance.

To the east the waters of the blue-bosomed lake sleep quietly at the feet of another group of majestic mountains, that, in the witchery of their outline and whiteness of surface, forms fantastically turreted castles and fairy shapes dimly resplendent in a halo of reflected light and drifting haze.

Darkly wooded islands, hooded points, rolling uplands, and evergreen

forests claim the eye, while swath-like roads and winding rivers mark the way. Changing lights come and go and shapely shadows race themselves across the plain, now dark, now light. That ever shifting scene below, the kindly clouded sky above, the rosy haze between, the snowy whiteness, and the dreamy silence unite in one matchless tribute to this one of nature's supremest efforts in her universe of art, which to see is to be inspired, which to attempt to portray by word or brush is to mock.

AN EVENING WALK.

IN dreamy grandeur the mountains sleep,
In sparkling tears the grasses weep,
The petaled glory of the blossoming earth,
The peaceful calm of evening's birth,
The skirted greenness of wooded lands,
The distant waters in shimmering strands,
The sun-claimed hills, the flushing west,
The mystic wideness, and the perfect rest.

A FIRESIDE MUSING.

WHEN north winds whistle o'er the brake
And scudding dry leaves mark their wake,
When hardening earth and threatening sky
Make nature's heart so cold and dry,
When snowy tears make hasty flight
And darkening clouds bring on the night,
When frosty sprights our noses wring
And hasty steps us homeward bring,
What hearty welcome, what glowing cheer
From lighted grate and faces dear,
Encircling all its glowing heat!
With outstretched hands and spreading feet:

Here hush and reverie sweetly meet,
And dreamy rest our senses greet,
We gaze upon the glowing pile;
And Fancy spreads her wing meanwhile,
Paints Titian scenes in living red,
Shades off from yellow flame to ashes dead
Till glowing forms our vision takes
And color landscapes freely makes.
In impish glee the embers dance
And fiery steeds around them prance,
A glittering host of firefly things
With burnished heads and golden wings
Then paling to a tumbled heap
From darkened embers slyly peep—
But then, we dream and fall asleep.

THE AURORA.

NIGHT had cast her shadow o'er all the earth and all those grand phenomena, incident to northern latitudes, of light and electric display were in their glory. Long lambent tongues of timorous light flamed quickly up the northern sky and washed the horrizon out in liquid fire, rising and sinking back, then swiftly ascending towards the zenith, they threw a weird halo o'er the whole scene.

To the west and south there were blinding flashes of light which leaped up, from one to another of the heavily charged clouds, then quickly flashed themselves out into flickering phantoms of reflected light.

As one looked upon it, it seemed as if the whole earth were attacked by the imps of fire and darkness and were intent upon its destruction, instead of only a play spell of the elements, and right lively they seemed as they frisked with the clouds and tantalized the stars into envious pallor.

MOONLIGHT FROM WIDE VIEW CAMP.

THIS was an ideal night, and from the encampment, which was on the northwest side of the valley, just out upon the brow of the mountain at its most commanding point, the whole sweep of the mountain-girt valley was in view, and a more enchanting and comprehensive one could scarcely be imagined.

The moon had some hours since swung itself clear of the horizon, and was having the whole arc of the heavens to itself, where it hung midway above the valley in all the pensiveness of its softened splendor. It is rare indeed that a point of view can be had that admits of so extended a view of the moon's career through the heavens, as could be seen from the point where the camp was situated; nothing obstructed the

view from horizon to zenith, from zenith to horizon, one perfect span of scintillating blue, with only an occasional starry point and the great round moon.

At their feet long stealthy shadows crept out to reconnoitre the fields of light beyond, but elsewhere all was blanketed with that silvery transmitted light. The mountains and hills were submerged, the trees and shrubs were dipped in it.

Away to the east a dozen of miles, upon the surface of the lake it spread great paths and zones of light which tipped the restless waters with diamond points, a highway for fairy feet. In glint and shadow darkly outlined islands and wooded shores in this illusive light made the water's expanse look, not a highway for commerce or the home of fishes, but an enchanted oasis of light in the great desert of forest land.

AMBITION.

UNDUE ambition is the bane of life,
A weary war, an endless bitter strife,
An aimless reaching into space,
A vision that has cursed our race.
It steals our joys, and robs of cheer,
Makes life unhappy, and costs too dear.

INTROSPECTION.

IT has been well said that men cannot be judged so well by their completed as by their uncompleted work. You may not judge so well of an artist's conception and skill by his finished pictures as by his unfinished ones.

Down deep in the chambers of every man's heart there lie, hidden by the cobwebs of the past, the whitened skeletons of many an unrealized ambition, many a buried hope, which were either slain by his own slothfulness or whose life has been crushed out by the iron hand of circumstances.

In the human heart are many graves, and could we but read the inscriptions upon their head-stones, we should know the secret of many a life's failure, of many a promise unfulfilled.

SECRET OF HAPPINESS.

HE who would enjoy the truest and most lasting happiness upon this earth should give heed to the one universal law of compensation that substance exhausted is substance lost.

The most delicious repast becomes nauseous from satiety; there are bitter dregs in every cup that is drained too dry; there is always disappointment and regret in the overdone, even the flower is sweeter and more fragrant just as it buds into blossom than when its widely expanded petals are ready to let go their hold and fall to earth.

It is the stopping just outside the line enough that makes continuous and com-

pleter happiness and keeps burning upon the altars of our lives the incense of a lively satisfaction.

So imperceptible is the line between perfection and decay that one had best eat his fruit a little less ripe than to risk the danger of the poison that lurks in over-ripeness.

REFLECTION.

LET him to whom the cares and sorrows of this world seem too much to endure, remember that he is but a part of one great whole, and all these things are but phases of a grand system which, when it has evolved its own, will reveal the beauties of a perfect fitting in of purpose to accomplishment, in which he holds the largest share who has suffered most.

SCEPTICISM.

THE man who consciously attempts to pull down the structure of human faith which the labor and beliefs of many centuries have built up, and which experience has demonstrated to have in them the power of truth, and erects no other in its stead or offers no better substitute, is guilty of a heinous offence against God, man, and himself. Such a man must be girt about by his own opinions to the exclusion of others, and enormously puffed up by his self-knowledge. Such a man must necessarily destroy the faiths and hopes of many, and would soon people the earth with sorrow. Pause long before you attempt to dislodge

one single stone of the structure which the blood of many has flowed to erect, and around which are clinging the tendrils of human love, human devotion, and human faith. He who does this smites his fellow-man and hates truth.

THE IMPENETRABLE.

THE things which hold for us the greatest interest are not the things we know the most about; they are rather those in which there is revealed only sufficient to enkindle the desire to know more.

That ever enticing just beyond without our touch, that mysterious illusive future, that veil of the unknown region against which all our darts of theory are hurled, and which, though never destroyed, is sometimes rent at the outer edge, and through which come glimpses of realizable possibilities to view; but that inner veil which hides from view the secret of life itself, no shaft can pierce, no battle-axe of investigation hew away, and there must ever remain until lifted by the hand of God, and that will mean eternity.

A THOUGHT.

WE cannot afford to ignore our individuality of constitution or personality in the estimate of our fitness for this or that, and our life-work must be chosen only after we have carefully weighed our capacities and our weaknesses.

We never need hope by education or culture to do away with our nature, for it is only those stronger souls that are able to stand up under the strain of being what they are not. If we should take some delicate flower from its hot-house environment and expose it to a northern blast, thinking to toughen it to a longer ruddier life, we would only destroy it; its

beauty and symmetry would become a shrivelled tissue of discolored pulp, and whatever mission of sweetness or hope it may have had for some human heart, exquisitely in sympathy with nature in her mood of flowers, lost altogether.

THREE DEFINITIONS OF LOVE.

LOVE is the blossoming of the soul's elementary growth preparatory to the fruitage of its grandest, truest life.

Love is the noblest impulse of the human heart that sweetly yields itself unreservedly to the desire to be happy and make its object so.

Love is the complete yielding of one's self to the appreciation of one's affinities in another, and has its source in that strongest element of the soul to which all other elements and impulses of that soul are subordinated, the overmastering appreciation of the Divine as manifested in some feature of His works.

LOVE'S AWAKENING.

FROM 'neath the scarred and seamed surface of the heart,
A new and fuller life comes bursting through
A stirring of the depth of soul so long its unknown part,
A sweet awakening to a truer life it never knew.
A soul's response to soul's desire for nobler things to do,
A heavenly blessing falling like the fragrant dew.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

IN a land of Orient splendor, where the
stars are wondrous bright,
Long ago there came the angels to the
shepherds in the night;
Wafted from the heavenly chorus over
Bethlehem's sleeping hills,
Came those rhythmic angel voices through
the night air calm and still.
Then again in joyous anthems from the
vaulted starlit sky,
Came the welcome, gladd'ning tidings that
no more need man to die.
Peace on earth in floating whispers, peace
on earth, in glad triumphant song;
Good-will, good-will, came the voicings of
that joyous angel throng.

Peace on earth, good-will to men all the
mighty chorus sings,
And the echo of that chorus down the
centuries still it rings.

In the east a star ariseth blessing all it
shines upon,
Guiding westward humble wise men to the
place of Bethlehem ;
Still westward led the star of promise,
with its shimmering crystal light,
O'er the Bethlehem stable pausing at the
peaceful holy sight,
Past the palace led their footsteps to that
stable's lowly door,
Where within the young Child lieth down
upon the earthen floor.
Bringing sweet and savory spices, bringing
frankincense and gold
To fulfil the law's tradition by the prophets
long foretold ;

Bringing in their hearts a welcome to the
humble Saviour Child,
Blessing in exalted fervor whom the Jews
at last reviled.

Though the years have passed in number
since the gladness of that night,
Still we hear the angel voices singing at
the goodly earthly sight,
As mankind in happy greeting and with
faces sweetly bright,
Sing again their Christmas carols and the
little ones delight.
Peace on earth still is falling from the
starlit vaulted sky;
Good-will, it is ever coming to the seekers
who upon His words rely.

CHRIST IN THE GARDEN.

HANDS in touch with ours do meet,
As in submission divinely sweet.
To the Father's will He humbly bows;
With breaking heart and sweating brows,
In agony and pain so great
He pleads humanity's fate;
And meekly yields to death by those who hate,
While all the universe doth pause and wait,
Till this supremest act of love is done,
Man 's redeemed, and the victory won.

A TWILIGHT REVERIE.

WHEN pales the last sunlit ray,
And twilight falls upon the weary day;
When filmy shades of softest gray
Creep o'er the earth and steal the light away;
When vagueness holds uncertain sway,
And ghostly forms our sight betray;
When darkening shadows bound the sight,
And fading light brings on the night;
When indistinctness makes marvellous shapes,
And all forms our fancy in mystery drapes;
When action dies and reverie wakes,
And of earth a phantom kingdom makes,
A peopled host of half-formed thought
In grotesque figures dimly wrought.

The legions of the past troop by,
In serried ranks these ghosts I spy,
Accoutred each to memory true
They pass and pass in strange review.
Some forms it seems I never knew—
But from the past they surely grew.
Pass on, pass on in silent calm.
Let time apply her healing balm,
Till only, in that ghostly file,
I see the best freed from all guile,
A lesson dear of right secured,
Of faith renewed by trials endured.
But now these forms recede, they dimmer grow,
Their outlines fade, ah! now they go
And leave behind a softened glow,
A haloed radiance o'er all the past, doth gently flow.
I see its need to growth and form,
To have made me strong to meet the storm.

To soul's uplifting, to heart made warm
For fellow-man, for nature's charm;
A kindling force to larger life
To broader vision and nobler strife.
Ah! changeless past, 't is better so,
Though why, with downcast eyes I may
not know.
But when mine eyes in trust I raise,
Behold! the wisdom of Thy ways.
O dearest Father, Power Divine,
Though these Thy ways they are not mine.
A restful calm steals o'er my sense,
My thought is held in sweet suspense.
With half-closed eyes I see a light,
I rouse to find it really night.

LINES AT DEATH OF A FRIEND.

AS breaks the dawn upon the night's decline,
Her spirit broke the bonds of clay,
And shone with sweetness all divine,
Swept the curtained barrier from her soul away,
Emitting through the rifts an immortal ray;
And thus her night was radiant day.
As dies the last sweet chord from harps atune,
As fades the incense of the sweetest flowers of June,
As dies the dew upon the summer grasses' blade,
So went her spirit—so the heavenly summons she obeyed.

ROSES.

ROSES, roses fragrant and red,
Roses, roses so faded and dead,
Roses, roses, your sweetness has fled,
Fallen your petals to slumber's bed ;
You live only where fancy has led,
And your sweetness is now to memory wed.

STRAY LINES.

WHEN skies were blue and tints were warm,
Came stealthy winter in whitened mask to rob of charm,
But skies resolved to bluer grow and tints to have a warmer hue,
And sunlight bathe with brighter view and fill the earth with beauty new.

A LITTLE GIRL WATCHING FOR THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

WHEN the evening shadows fall
And the darkness covers all,
Then I watch your coming bright
Twinkle, twinkle, little light.
You are such a pretty sight
Making daytime out of night.
If you did not twinkle so
We should never, never know
How and where the people go.

JACK FROST'S DREAM.

FAR away in the Northland on a cold starry night,
Jack Frost lay bound in fetters so icy and tight
That, freezing and snapping with long pent-up greed,
He longed to be free that on he might speed
To the land of the south, with its fair sunny skies,
With the light of the summer still in its dark eyes.
So restive and sullen into dreaming he fell,
And this is his dream to you children I tell.

I' ve waited so long for this frisk of mine,
That if it comes not quickly I 'll surely decline;
My legs are quite frozen to shape that is strong,
My white hair is quite grown, my whiskers are long.
I feel all the strength of that maddening glee
That attack on the warm air always gives me.
How I 'll pelt them with sharp falling hail,
How my cold breath will cause their faces to pale,
As I pile high my fortresses in huge columns white
And bury their homes and their country far out of sight.
How my snow-flake army will march to victory new

And lay my white carpet where green grasses grew.
How I 'll stop the glad waters that onward do flow,
And chill all the air wherever I go.
I 'll establish my kingdom in all their green land,
And wither their gardens with my cold icy hand.
I 'll rule with a spirit of keen searching frost,
And he who dares brave me will surely be lost,
For I 'll freeze him to silence out on the wide plain,
Or smite him to death with a cold freezing rain.
Obedience I 'll have in all this wide realm,
And the slightest resistance I 'll soon overwhelm.

I 'll hold down the warmth with my frost-forged laws,
With my icy long fingers I 'll strangle the thaws.
Yes, with firm hand I 'll hold my vassals in thrall,
And the brown earth will crack at the sound of my call.
But I 'll soon come to tire of this dull sleepy life
And fly back to the Northland to help in that strife.
I 'll hurry away from the land of the South
And leave it to perish by heat and by drought.
I 'll forsake all my legions, a serried white host,
To sink into earth like an army of ghosts.
With many a sigh I 'll hie me away,
And not come back for many a day.

But, hark! I must hasten or I 'll be o'er-
took
By the rush of that river, or the flow of
that brook.
For loosened my hold on the reins of the
flood,
I feel a warm breath melting my blood.
Alas, I 'm too late for the winds hold me
fast,
I 'm dying of south wind, and my day it
is past.

HEPATICA.

THE spring was tardy, the fields were
gray,
The flowers they came not till the May—
No, that 's not really true,
For I knew where some grew.
By a lonely pathway, in meadows new,
The sweet-faced Hepatica came pinking
into view.

ARBUTUS.

WHERE the poplars are greening
And the crimpy mosses grow,
Near to where the brook is singing
At escape from ice and snow;
Past the pussy willows brushing,
In a frothy, hasty rushing,
To the river's onward flow—
'T is there I love to often go.
All the woodsy odors quaffing
With the patchy sunlight laughing.
As I search for spring's chary token
In a promise never broken.
In its smiling pink perfection,
Seeks to hide from our detection,
Slyly waits to peep up at us,
Sweet and trailing, dear Arbutus.

AN ADIRONDACK SUNSET.

THE daylight pales, the colors flush
across the sky,
The mountains smile, the uplands blush
the sun's good-by.

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